



FACT SHEET: President Trump's Presidential Memorandum Elevating Steve Bannon to Attend National Security Council Meetings is an Unprecedented Threat to our Safety

- **President Trump's inclusion of Steve Bannon in National Security Council meetings is unprecedented and risks our national security.**
- **Elevating a political operative like Bannon to a position reserved for seasoned national security experts is yet another sign that President Trump is placing politics over our national security.**
- **Bannon's reckless and extreme views have no place in the National Security Council and will make Americans less safe.**

***Background:** President Trump's Presidential Memorandum on reorganizing the National Security Council (NSC) invites the president's chief strategist, Steve Bannon, to attend all NSC meetings and be a standing member of the NSC's Principals Committee, the top interagency group for discussing national security. In addition, participation of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of National Intelligence on the NSC Principals Committee is determined by issue. [Presidential Memorandum, [1/28/17](#)]*

President Trump's Executive Order appointing Steve Bannon to the National Security Council is unprecedented and risks our national security.

President Trump took the unprecedented step of having a political advisor with no high-level national security experience officially attend National Security Council meetings. Bannon's formal participation in NSC meetings represents a shocking break with longstanding tradition of keeping these policy discussions free from political influence. [NPR, [1/29/17](#)]

- **Even President George W. Bush barred his political adviser from these meetings so that national security decisions would not be "tainted" by political calculations.** President George W. Bush's last chief of staff, Josh Bolten, barred Karl Rove from NSC meetings. He told a conference audience in September 2016 that a president's decisions made with those advisers "involve life and death for the people in uniform" and should "not be tainted by any political decisions." [New York Times, [1/29/17](#)]

Senior military officials, Republican Senators, and other national security experts have expressed strong concerns about the possibility of this order hurting our national security.

- **Michael G. Mullen, retired United States Navy Admiral who was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 2007 to 2011:** “Having Mr. Bannon as a voting member of the principals committee will have a negative influence on what is supposed to be candid, nonpartisan deliberation. I fear that it will have a chilling effect on deliberations and, potentially, diminish the authority and the prerogatives to which Senate-confirmed cabinet officials are entitled.” [New York Times, [2/6/17](#)]
- **Leon E. Panetta, former White House chief of staff, Defense Secretary and C.I.A. Director:** “The last place you want to put somebody who worries about politics is in a room where they’re talking about national security”. [New York Times, [1/29/17](#)]
- **Michael Hayden, retired United States Air Force General and former CIA Director:** “It puts ideology at the center over the professional kinds of information that the DNI and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs bring to the party...[Bannon] will inject politics and his ideological brand of policy. And that will come in the face of what I call the - the fact guys, the guys coming in with data, the world-as-it-is people as opposed to Bannon, whom I would categorize as the-world-as-we-want-it-to-be, or he believes it to be.” [NPR, [1/30/15](#)]
- **Republican Senators have also expressed concern.** Senator John McCain [R-AZ], Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, called Bannon's role on the NSC a “radical departure from any national security council in history.” [The Hill, [1/29/17](#)]

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President Trump has repeatedly dismissed the views of American national security experts:

- When asked whether he trust[s] intelligence, President Trump said, “Not so much from the people that have been doing it for our country. I mean, look what’s happened over the last 10 years. ... It’s been catastrophic.” [Politico, [8/17/16](#)]
- President Trump said he “know[s] more about ISIS than the generals do.” [Washington Post, [11/13/15](#)]
- President Trump has called our military “a disaster” and said it “is in shambles.” [Washington Post, [9/9/16](#)]
- After intelligence officials briefed President Trump on their report concluding that Russia interfered with the 2016 U.S. presidential election, he responded by saying that “there was absolutely no effect on the outcome of the election including the fact that there was no tampering whatsoever with voting machines.” [USA Today, [1/6/17](#)]

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- Bannon has expressed apocalyptic views on foreign affairs, disconnected from any reality, and reportedly described himself as a “Leninist” who wants to “destroy the state” and “bring everything crashing down.” [The Daily Beast, [8/22/16](#)]
- In a Web-post about police shootings and Black Lives Matter, Bannon asked, “What if the people getting shot by the cops did things to deserve it? There are, after all, in this world, some people who are naturally aggressive and violent.” [Brietbart, [7/10/16](#)]
- Bannon's ex-wife accused him of making anti-Semitic remarks, claiming that “the biggest problem he had with [The Archer School for Girls] is the number of Jews that attend. He said that he doesn't like Jews and that he doesn't like the way they raise their kids to be 'whiney brats' and that he didn't want the girls going to school with Jews.” [NBC News, [8/27/16](#)]
- In a 2011 radio interview, Bannon made homophobic remarks about the women's movement, saying that progressives feel threatened by conservative women because they aren't “a bunch of dykes that came from the Seven Sisters schools.” [BuzzFeed, [8/29/16](#)]